174 to maintain, which others seized from them, and suzerains became
182 vassals. But in spite of these contingencies of war, the Tuareg
565 attach great importance to blood origins and always respect high-
[554 727] born people, even though they may be their vanquished /adversaries/.

Thus, at the present time, the nobles of the Ahaggar and the
554 Ajjer may be seen to seek alliances with women of the fallen fraction
565 of the Imenan Sultans. This adds to the luster of their high origin
581 a certain character of religious nobility, which is much appreciated among Moslems.

000 Monogamy and matriarchy. -- To understand Tuareg society, one must remember two important facts, facts which are, moreover, not completely independent of each other, monogamy and matriarchy.

/151/ While the Tuareg are Moslems and have polygamous
174 peoples as neighbors, it is astonishing to note that they practice
562 monogamy. This is an evident indication that women occupy an
[545] important place in their society, in no way comparable to what they occupy among the Arabs. This was very striking to the first travelers who thought they saw traces of an ancient Christianity in the persistence of monogamy. This argument might be held if we did not know, on the other hand, that the social organization of the Tuareg rests on matriarchy, an ancient custom much earlier than the Christian era, which explains monogamy and the particularly high position of women.

Gautier writes on this subject: "It may be said that the Tuareg practice chivalrous gallantry; the expression is inadequate only because of the association it evokes. Our chivalry has a Christian origin; the respect of the Tuareg for women has much deeper and more remote reasons. It goes back to matriarchy, which is earlier than the notion of the state and even that of the family. It is a living witness of completely primordial humanity, a sentiment, if I may say so, of the quaternary age." (1)

1. La conquête du Sahara /The Conquest of the Sahara/, p. 33.

174 in the Sudan, the Sanhadja-Nounou, was governed by a woman named Bikoun-Kabi, whom the Sonrhaï /Songhai/ emperor Sonni-Ali had to conquer in order to seize her territory. Es-Sadi, author of the Tarik-es-Soudan, reports several facts of this kind.

The Islamization of the Berber tribes certainly had a part in the elimination of the custom. Women no longer play any official [562] political role in our times. But they have made themselves the guardians of ancestral customs and folklore, and their authority is [626] so strong that one /154/ can only quote the answer of a Tuareg to an Arab who admonished him upon the subject of Tuareg mores: "No one would dare do otherwise, for then no woman would look at us any longer."

162 The persistence of monogamy among the Tuareg is also favored 182 by the considerable excess of men found among them, an exceptional 515 fact and contrary to what we observe in other human groups.

The aménokal. -- Aménokal means in Tamashek "possessor of 643 the country" (from am, possessive prefix, and akal, "country"). [192] In the Ahaggar this title is conferred only upon the supreme chief reigning over a whole of noble, vassal, or assimilated tribes. [184] In Sudanese tribes, on the other hand, it may be applied to heads of fractions, indeed even to mere camp chiefs.

The aménokal is designated according to hereditary rules deriving from the matriarchal system. He is always chosen, not only in the same tribe, but in the same line which one could compare to the clan. His domination, to be effective, must be sanctioned by the approval of the nobles to whom are joined for the occasion the chiefs of vassal tribes. For the latter, approval involves an agreement to pay tribute later.

Sometimes there are several pretenders to the title; perhaps a descendant of a formerly ousted family asserts his rights, or perhaps the natural heir is recognized incapable of leadership. This brings about a competition where hereditary rules are not always respected.

184 The Inislimen way of life is the same as that of the Tuareg.
565 They speak the same language and administer themselves with no
193 intervention from the Imochar. A few cases of polygamy have been
[631] observed among them. This is the result of their gradual Islamization,
[595] which favors the custom, and of patriarchy which was already in practice in some Sudanese tribes.

565 The Imrad. -- Imrad probably comes from the Tamashek root
[192] égeid, égeit, which means "kid," "little goat," and from the prefix
[422] am indicating possession. In short, this means "possessors of goats."
In fact, the Imrad formerly could own only goats, for the Imochar reserved the possession of camels for themselves.

Their nickname is Kel Oulli, which also means "goat people," a name which they prefer to Imrad, which is probably a bit degrading for them.

[631] /165/ They make up tribes enfeoffed to the Imochar and are their vassals.

The Imochar have a certain scorn for them and consider them people of low birth, not of the pure Tuareg race; the name Taouia Settefet, meaning "of black descent," is often applied to them. (1)

1. Among the Ioullimmiden they are referred to as Idinet.

173 Nothing indicates a racial inferiority of the Imrad to the Imochar,
565 however. If we want to interpret the old legends of the Ahaggar,
144 everything leads us to believe that the Imrad were in most instances the first occupants of the country, and the Imochar, who were the invaders, were conquerers who made themselves masters of the country by force. The crossbreeding with the blacks cannot be a decisive criterion, for many Imrad tribes are not physically more "Negroid" than the Imochar. It is also true that the Imrad are
[186] less rigorous than the Imochar in maintaining the integrity of old
[184] Tuareg customs. They have less greatness of soul and sentiment, as well as less ethnic pride.

565 Unions, or more exactly concubinage, between Imrad and
[595] Negresses are very common.

[567] Imrad have the right to possess black slaves who are employed in household work and in keeping the herds.

114 Schirmer has said that the Ahaggar Imrad were sedentary peoples
241 entrusted with keeping the gardens; (1) he has committed an error,
565

1. Le Sahara, p. 298.

certainly because of erroneous information. This is all the more curious since Duveyrier had already defined exactly the position of the Imrad. (2)

2. Les Touareg du Nord, p. 334.

114 Duveyrier translated the word amrid by the word "serf," which
565 corresponds exactly to the Arab expression ra'aya, and also because
566 the ra'aya are subjects liable to forced labor and taxes, whom the marabouts are not allowed to possess by Moslem law. Duveyrier believed he was confirmed in his opinion because of the fact that the Inislimen of the Ajjer did not have the right to have Imrad. This is an error of interpretation. This Arabic term cannot be suitable under the circumstances, for the social class of the Tuareg Imrad has no equivalent among the Arabs.

We have preferred the term "vassals" which is more suitable
[651] in our minds, because the Imrad are not unconditionally subject to
[643] forced labor, they pay a perfectly defined vassalage fee, their
[657] chiefs participate in the election of the aménokal, and they themselves own slaves.

/167/ Moreover, the term "vassals" has been adopted by Richer, Deniker, Verneau, etc.

567 of their ancestors. Ahaggar slaves are perfectly adapted to the desert and possess physical qualities of sobriety much superior to those of their racial brothers /170/ in the Sudan, who have difficulty living there when they are transported from the Sudan.

The Akli is subject to forced labor at the will of his master. He owes all his work to his master and is his property, but he receives a few advantages and can use a few days of work a week for himself.

In the Ahaggar the Iklan are treated perfectly well by their masters, to whom they are quite attached. They share meals with them and sustain with an even temper the good or bad fortune which the camp enjoys. Their children are reared with those of the Tuareg and on the same footing.

They benefit from certain humanitarian rules which do credit to the Tuareg. Thus a slave who is too young or too old cannot be liberated and must be supported by his master.

[428] The Iklan are bequeathed as a heritage; they may be possessors of animals, whose usufruct they then have; but upon their death these animals fall to their masters and not to their own children.

The Imochar, Inislimen, and Imrad have all rights over their slaves. The latter cannot marry without their consent. Generally, 567 when there are a man slave and a woman slave in the same camp, 582 they are married to each other, and the man receives a goat which 583 he gives to his wife as a bride price. If the slave wants to seek a wife for himself and finds one in another camp, he receives nothing from his master and must find the means to pay his wife's bride price by himself; this bride price is commonly fixed at ten goats. The slaves put in charge of keeping the flocks and who are often absent from the camp because of their occupation usually do not [836] marry. "They take their pleasure where they find it," said Father de Foucauld.

565 The Tuareg often take slave women as concubines. There are 567 several advantages to this: first, they have no bride price to pay,
595

565 and, second, they are dealing with a woman who submits to their
527 caprices more easily than a woman of their race and whom they can
595 change at will. Children born of these concubinages are free but are
not members of their father's class. The latter recognizes them as
[428] his, but they are morally considered slaves. However, they can
inherit from their father.

565 /171/ Tuareg women of the noble class who have relations with
833 the Iklan are discredited among their own people. But the case is
558 not very rare, it seems, particularly since a legend maintains that
[842] the relations between Imochar women and captives are sterile.

867 The Iklan have very corrupt mores and practice pederasty and
[838 other vices. To steal and lie is instinctive for them, defects found
679] for that matter in most of the Sudanese Negroes.

Thus, when they keep goats in the pasture, they are accustomed
[272] to sucking them. Therefore, in some camps they never receive any
304 milk since it is rightfully presumed that they have served themselves
234] first. Some masters, to protect themselves from these thefts, do not
hesitate to padlock the mouths of the herdsmen by perforating their
lips. A few years ago, there was still an old woman in the Ahaggar
who had suffered this mutilation.

They live very familiarly with their masters, and some have
deserved their confidence, either by their intelligence or by their
[644] courage during raids. The former aménokal of the Ahaggar, Moussa
ag Amastan, was always accompanied by his Negro Chernach, and
the feats of war that they accomplished together are still the object
of the most marvelous tales during camp nights.

567 A slave may ask to change masters when he is mistreated or
685 when he hopes for more advantages. Since the Tuareg generally
does not want to be separated from his slave with no recompense,
the slave resorts to a subterfuge which consists in cutting off the ear
of an animal from the herd of the master to whom he wishes
henceforth to belong, or committing some other depredation of the
same sort. This offense brings about a right of life or death over the
slave who commits it, on the part of the injured party. In practice,
according to the accepted custom, this slave automatically becomes

2:Briggs E-4, 5 (ca. 1956) 1958
[P. 98A] MS25 Tuareg MS25
Hoggar

567 dowry. But slaves are well fed and cared for as a rule; they get two or three days off each week to look after their own affairs, their children are brought up with the children of their masters, and custom forbids the freeing of a slave who is either too old or too young to fend for himself. A slave may even have a few goats of his own, although when he dies they are not inherited by his family but revert to his master instead. Barth (1857a, vol. 1, p. 387) notes as a striking exception that he saw slaves hitched to a plow and driven with whips in the Auderas Valley, some 60 miles northwest of Agadès.

567 Female slaves are often taken as concubines by Tuareg men of the Ahaggar, who prize
595 them because they are less capricious and overbearing than Tuareg women are and "be-
[827] cause they have cool skins," a point which would bear further investigation with a skin temperature machine. The children of such unions are often recognized by their fathers but do not inherit from them, and, although free, they have a debased social standing little better than that of their slave forebears. Moussa ag Amastan, who was Amenokal of the Ahaggar from 1905 to 1921,[18] remained unmarried for over 50 years, during most of which time he lived with a bevy of Negro concubines and a young Tuareg girl, named Harendou, whom he had captured on a raid into the Niger Bend country (Benhazera, 1908, p. 142; Lhote, 1955, pp. 221–23). Although this case was exceptional, it was by no means unique.

567 The slaves of the nomadic Tuareg, like those of sedentary communities in the Sahara, seem to have no tribal or clan organizations, but they too have a strong feeling of corporate solidarity that finds expression now and then in nocturnal jamborees which are Sudanese in character.

326 The smiths of the Ahaggar present a fa-
171 miliar culture pattern that characterizes groups of smiths and tinkers which, as we have seen, are to be found living among a whole series of nomadic peoples scattered all the way from Baluchistan through Arabia and on, southwest-

[217] [18] Lhote (1955, p. 220) gives the date of Moussa's death as 1920, the official genealogical table of the Ahaggar nobility, which is kept in the archives of the French Army post at Tamanrasset, gives it as 1921, and Foley (1930, p. 9) gives it as 1922. In 1956

us that they are the descendants of a woman by the name of Tin Hinane. In the war which brought Azdjer and Ahaggar to arms, the tears of the Imanan women were the deciding factor in the Ahaggar taking up arms.

As to inheritance, it is known that this is handed down through the woman. It is from his mother that the son holds the right to command and to the collection of the "tioussé," or tribute from the "imr'ad," or serfs. Not only is the son noble or serf according as his mother is noble or serf regardless of the father's status, for "it is the womb that holds the child," but he also changes his tribe and becomes a member of his mother's tribe if she does not belong to the same one as her husband.

In life, the woman enjoys a freedom of conduct which is not customarily allowed in Moslem countries.

She does not veil her face like Moslem women except as a sign of respect, when she draws her veil, "ikerhi," over her face.

She goes freely to pay visits to her parents, uncles, aunts, etc., and since she sees them seldom because of the distances between camps, custom decrees that the relative who receives her visit should make her a present.

She has succeeded in maintaining monogamy, which is the rule among the Tuareg even though they are Moslems. /12/

Even though married she may have a man friend, "amidi" ⵄⵎⵉⴷⵉ, who sings her praises and makes verses for her, while she gives him something for his personal use. He is, in a way, her knight. Thus, although married, Dassine embroidered for her cousin, Moussa ag Amastane, the amenokal of the Ahaggar, the bridle and breast strap of his horse, while Moussa, without hesitation, recited before everyone the lines which he composed in her praise, and often received her visits.

In the absence of her husband she may receive a man who comes to chat with her and pay her a visit, without the husband, on his return, dreaming of being annoyed. Only adultery in flagrante delicto can justify the anger of the husband.

Men's chorus:

Atelsimet ⵜⴰⵍⵙⵉⵎⵉⵜ You will be clothed.

Women's chorus:

Nerdjih ⵏⵔⴷⵊⵉ We are afoot.

Men's chorus

Atar'ermet ⵜⴰⵔⵔⴰⵎⵜ You will be mounted.

Then the bride and the women, addressing the groom, sing these two lines:

Outterir' inelli n isakan ⵓⵜⵜⴻⵔⵔⵉ ⵉⵏⴻⵍⵍⵉ ⵏ ⵉⵙⴰⴽⴰⵏ

Essoufeq inelli n foudan ⵙⵙⵓⴼⵖ ⵉⵏⴻⵍⵍⵉ ⵏ ⴼⵓⴷⴰⵏ

"I do not want any bechna (carried by) young camels.

"I prefer bechna (carried by) strong and solid camels," meaning by this that she expects of her husband the deeds of a strong, brave man and not the behavior of a child. /18/

Then the bride enters the tent, and the guests withdraw and go to feast.

For seven days the groom's food is provided by the bride's relatives. During this time the newlyweds do not leave their tent, but people go there to entertain and visit them.

Custom decrees that the newlyweds live beside the wife's parents for a year in order to give her time to get used to separation from them, which they call "azʿalaf" ⴰⵣⵄⴰⵍⴰⴼ (from the verb "ezʿli" ⴻⵣⵄⵍⵉ, to separate).

Monogamy is the absolute rule.

We have said that the ahal is one of the reasons for late marriages. Another reason lies in the fact that many Tuareg are satisfied with Negro concubines.

Chapter VIII

Divorce

Divorce, in Tamashek "tellef" ⵜⴻⵍⵍⴻⴼ or "oulout" ⵓⵍⵓⵜ ⵜⴻⵍⵍ (from the verb "ellef" ⵜⴻⵍⵍ, to divorce),

Besides, there are few negroes who are not armed by their masters with a "tar'da" (spear with a wooden shaft) and with a "takouba" (saber), of which they are very proud. The best are sent on raids, and it seems that they acquit themselves very well in combat. 411 563 567 726

As to the negresses, there are some who confine themselves to attending to the care of the household and the tent, but there are quite a few others who are raised to the dignity of concubines. A noble Tuareg prefers to share his bed with a negress rather than to marry a "tamr'idt" (serf). He marries late, and when he decides to, he looks especially for a woman who, by her /34/ birth, will give his children future rights to command. The negress profits from this. 563 567 595

The negroes and negresses are not, as a rule, mistreated by the Tuareg. Besides, if the case should arise, they know how to use the following curious custom in use among the Tuareg. 563 567 645

When a slave, negro or negress, becomes too unhappy with his master and wishes to become the slave of another master, he splits the ear of a child or a horse or hamstrings a mehari; in short, damages anything valuable that belongs to the master he wishes to have; then he stays beside his deed. Naturally, in reparation for the harm done, the negro is given in full possession to the injured master. There may be protest, if there was connivance between the slave and the master he wishes to have, and, in this case, the oath is deferred and the case brought before a marabout or a cadi. [692]

Thus the negress Tenoufek, who belonged to Semana, sister of Bika ag Moumou of the Kel Ahnet, slit the ear of a mare belonging to Sidi ag Keradji, the amenokal of the Taïtoq and the Kel Ahnet. In reparation the negress was given to Sidi, with whom she still remains.

Another example: the negro of El Biodh ould Settafi of the Settaf, hamstrung two camels belonging to Ibedi ag Bassi of the Ir'echoumen. In reparation El Biodh had to give Ibedi the negro and a camel besides. /35/